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Vol. 10 - #5 - Issue 59 - August/September 2014

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**Azodanum**  
*Interview by Michael Carnage*

2014 has already seen the birth of a loud, droning and wicked four-piece of sludge called Azodanum. Their inescapable vibrations are sure to make waves here in Victoria, as well as throughout the rest of the West Coast. I've already seen them live three times and have the damaged eardrums to prove it. But instead of that being a deterrent, it only made me want to know more. I started hunting down the members, only to find guys I've heard before in Mendoza and Northern. That made me a little excited when Kevin Smart agreed to an interview. So he took a

break from what I assume to be epic amounts of bong hits, delivering hearing damage and all around awesomeness to help me out.

**Absolute Underground: Is there a story or a deep meaning behind the band's name?**  
 Kevin Smart: It was the name of a new mineral that was found in the traces from that meteor that exploded over Russia that time.  
**AU: What were your expectations for releasing new music and are they being met?**  
 KS: Well, we haven't released

anything yet. So, no. Slowed down by excessive bong hits. We will be releasing the demo in some sort of tangible form eventually. We're currently writing for a full-length that we should have recorded before the end of the summer. Then, however long it takes to mix and press, etc. We do have shirts with our faces on them though, so fuckin' buy those or whatever.  
**AU: It's summer festival season, are there any festivals you would do anything to be a part of?**  
 KS: Roadburn or Hellfest would rule. Maryland Death Fest would ruin my life. We are, however, playing BurgerFest in Vancouver. Go to it. It's delicious.

**VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY**

**AU: Are there larger tour plans for the future?**  
 KS: Yes.  
**AU: Do you have a favourite show that you've played so far?**  
 KS: We played at Logan's with Ancients a while back and blew the power a couple times. We all play with multiple amps because we're dumb.  
**AU: Is there a primary songwriter or is it done collectively as a band?**  
 KS: Initially, it was mostly Norm and Derek, but now we're all pretty involved.  
**AU: Have you guys gotten any good stalkers yet?**  
 KS: Metal shows are kind of a sausage fest. I guess that doesn't really exclude any kind of stalking.  
**AU: What's a mandatory roadtrip food?**  
 KS: Bong hits.

**AU: If all of you shaved your beards, do you think you would lose your power?**  
 KS: No, but we'd lose about 15 pounds. Only Derek and I have beards.

There are four songs up on BandCamp now, and more shows coming up in the future. If you are even sort of into sludge and/or stoner metal, do yourself a favour and check this band out. The live recordings are almost as good as the live shows, but you need the speakers for it. Playing these guys at half volume just wouldn't do them any justice.

<http://azodanum.bandcamp.com/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/Azodanum>

TOYS WITH MEMORIES INCLUDED

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**Astrakhan**  
*Interview by Willow Gamberg*

**Absolute Underground: Describe your sound for the folks that have never heard it before.**  
 Rob Zawistowski [Guitar & Vocals]: I would say we are cultivating a sound somewhere in between doom, sludge, and progressive metal, with hints of other eclectic favourites.  
**AU: You guys just played the Armstrong Music Festival... How was that? Any highlights?**  
 RZ: Armstrong was amazing. So many great bands, and such an awesome feeling of unity and love. Adam, Dustan and I had a fantastic psychedelic adventure on the first night during which we were hopelessly lost in one of the smallest cities I have ever stayed overnight in. Music-wise, I loved Wilt. Their set caused a mass nutting in our jorts. Next day, Shithawk erased my hangover with a brutally intense morning set, and

Torrey really kept us going until the headliners. During Witch of the Waste, we dawned a four-man shirt and drunkenly windmilled into destruction during the mosh. All in all, a helluva time.  
**AU: You released *The Pillarist* EP in November 2013, and I hear rumours of another release in the works... When can we expect to hear new Astrakhan tunes?**  
 Dustan Toth [Bass & Vocals]: The new EP is in the works. No definite date for release yet, though but we are way too stoked on the album art to keep it to ourselves. We do have a four-way split vinyl with Aquanaut, Outside Dog, and Summering of our live sets at our new favourite underground venue. That one will probably be out in November with the EP to follow.  
**AU: I was at that underground show, it was awesome and sweaty as fuck. Looked like everyone was having a good time...**  
 RZ: It was one of the coolest shows I have ever played. It was nice to have some space to play around with an hour long set, from a musical standpoint. The crowd was super into it. We were knocked around, spit on, sweat on, spilled on, and still managed to get some pretty crunchy recordings down. Adam took a rogue beer can straight to the face. Boy, was he sour. Big props to everyone involved.  
**AU: Do you prefer playing underground gigs like Eagle's Nest and 333 to more "established" venues? Are underground gigs important to this, or any music scene?**  
 RZ: The sense of doing something illegal always heightens metal music. It creates a bond between band and audience and brands the show with an air of exclusivity and intrigue that would otherwise be lost at a regular venue. Plus, the after parties get so fucking weird that they would make Caligula blush.  
**AU: Tell us about the new artwork!**  
 DT: Definitely my favourite piece from the masterful fingers of Nick Patterson. He also drew our original logo and the art for our first shirt. Do some dope and check him out.

**VANCOUVER VENGEANCE**

**AU: Did you guys commission that design specifically, or did the artist just go wild?**  
 RZ: The art is loosely based on one of the two songs on the EP. The focus of the piece is the hypothetical character that song describes. We spoke about the concept, and pointed out some stuff of his we liked, and built it from there. He definitely took the reins with our basic ideas... I'm super stoked on it.



**AU: How do you find your sound has evolved over the last few years?**  
 RZ: I think we are getting heavier, and more focused. Our two-headed singing style is meshing nicely amidst a cleaner and less-nonsense musical approach.  
**AU: Any plans for a tour next year? What local bands would you most like to tour with?**  
 RZ: No big tour plans yet, but we are keeping busy locally, and nearby in Western Canada. I think it is important to save a tour for a truly vicious push,

momentum-wise.  
**AU: What's in store for Astrakhan? Any plans/goals/dreams in particular?**  
 DT: Astrakhan is growing and evolving constantly. We are all in very transient points in our lives and this band is one of the only islands of refuge and release that we have. I think the only plan we have is to keep on fighting our way to new songs and

new fans.  
**AU: Any final words for readers?**  
 Jerome Brewer [Drums]: Fuck music, eat cake.

*More information at*  
<http://astrakhanofficial.com/>  
<http://astrakhanofficial.bandcamp.com/>  
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Lethbridge DethFest 2014

By Lacey Paige

A maniacal maelstrom of metal will be tearing through small town Coaldale, just east of Lethbridge, this coming Labour Day Long Weekend, September 29th – 30th, for Hellberta’s annual Lethbridge Dethfest.

Dethfest 2014 boasts a jaw-shatteringly impressive lineup of 24 bands over the course of two nights, running the infinite gamut of heavy

Saturday, Aug. 30th.

“The band was inactive for a while and are now back and ready to rip shit up old-school, Dethbridge-style, which I think fits the bill nicely for this year’s fest,” he adds.

Bitchsplitter will be playing next in line to Canadian crossover mavericks, Dayglo Abortions, who are returning to the Dethfest lineup for their second time and have played multiple shows with the headliners since their first show at Eagle’s Hall. The Rev reminisces on that momentous occasion

as a shitshow to be remembered fondly.

“Dayglo is a band that has been with Dethbridge since the start of our metal scene,” he says. “Like the Golers, [they] appeal to both metalheads and punkers from the ‘Bridge. So this year’s fest is going to be fucking awesome, with several different tastes all rolled into one.”

Also front and centre of this year’s Dethfest disorder is a highly anticipated performance by Vancouver’s The Golers, who will be headlining on Friday, Aug. 29th. The Rev says he has been fighting since 2006 to get the guys on the Dethfest bill, but various circumstances just wouldn’t allow it.

“Their touring never lined up, but this year it has all worked out and the planets have aligned,” he explains. “It is a big deal to me because The Golers are the sound of Dethfest, and that sound totally represents what this town is all about. Our punk and metal scenes are very inbred, so it’s no surprise that the crossover sound of The Golers hits the nail on the fucking head.”

The fest first reared its hideously malformed head into the then-stagnant Dethbridge metal scene back in 2003; 2014 marks its fifth year in the running. Thrown together by The Rev Whitetrash with equal amounts of sheer audial shrapnel, putrefied goat guts and piss-warm Pilsner, Dethfest will snap necks, detonate eardrums and annihilate livers in what will be the heaviest of metal fests to plague the prairie lands this summer.

“It was a way for us to kick-start a metal scene in Dethbridge,” the Rev reflects. “We were spawned in an era where there was no metal scene in our town.”

Dethfest caters to up-and-coming metal acts that are looking for a solid opportunity to cut their teeth and make their mark on the scene, as well as the veteran groups that have shredded the path of local metal from the ground up.

“The fest is good for bands in every way,” The Rev divulges. “First off, it’s a bigger crowd and

the atmosphere is awesome. Dethfest vibes are insane! It’s also good for exposure and potential merch sales. For bands starting out and bands wanting to set up tours, Dethfest hooks ‘em up with other people, bands and contacts that provide useful when they want to get out and hit the road.”

As yet another brisk and unrelenting winter lingers just around the corner, Dethfest is the ultimate opportunity for Alberta-based metalheads to make the trek across the desolate wastelands of the prairies to unite, drink copious amounts of booze and support a catastrophic collective of local bands.

“What sets Dethfest above the rest is simply the quality and caliber of the bands,” The Rev says. “There are no shitty bands. Each and every one will kick your teeth in and leave you screaming for more, and each one brings their own unique form of metal to the forefront. It’s always a wicked fucking party. There is a great kinship between everyone that attends, and a general feeling of camaraderie.”

Pandemonium ensues on Friday, Aug. 29th at approximately 6:30 PM at The Vent, 1814 -20th Ave Coaldale, AB. Tickets are \$30 per night or \$50 for a two-day pass. Prize draws will be arranged for each night, and the winner(s) of a mega-prize package will be drawn as the fest wraps on Saturday night.

“Dethfest is one of those shows that gets bigger and better every time, so I’m looking forward to partying, playing, puking and putting on one of the best fucking metal shows... ever!” The Rev gushes.

Check out the official Lethbridge Dethfest Facebook page for more details and the full lineup: <https://www.facebook.com/DethbridgeDethfest>.

AUG 2014

01 LEGION OF GOONS  
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+ MAGDALENE

02 WINDIGO  
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05 BLEEKER RIDGE  
THE GROUNDS + THE CROOK ART + ZABA

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16 FEMME FATALE  
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19 ALL ELSE FAILS  
THE RISING + ENEMYUS + STAB TWIST PULL

20 HANG THE DJ

24 TWIZZTD  
KUNG FU VAMPIRE + AQALED

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Lee Palichuk  
Of Corrupted Canvas / Goblins N  
Ghouls

Interview by Lacey Paige

Of the many local horror-  
inspired artists that will be  
setting up shop at this year's  
fourth annual Calgary Horror  
Con at the Clarion Hotel and  
Conference Centre from  
August 2 - 3, Lee Palichuk  
of Corrupted Canvas and  
Goblins N Ghouls just may  
be the only one exhibiting  
a vibrant array of original,  
frightfully funny T-shirt  
designs for the youngest  
horror fans in training. Lee  
recently sat down with  
Absolute Underground to  
discuss his art, influences  
and life away from the  
canvas.



**Absolute Underground:**  
Going back to the very  
beginning, what  
inspired you  
to become an  
artist?

Lee Palichuk: My  
first inspirations  
came from  
cartoons and  
comics. I was, and  
still am, a huge  
fan of 80s and  
early- to mid-90s  
cartoons.

**AU:** You recently  
started up again in 2012, after taking a 10-year  
hiatus. Why the break? Where did you find the  
motivation to jump back into it?

LP: I painted here and there out of high school  
and then just stopped. Partying, work, then  
eventually a family, took over my spare time.

Once I got on Facebook I started  
following all these artists and  
seeing all this great artwork and  
it got my creative juices flowing  
again. So I pulled out all my old  
artwork and touched it up and  
did a few new pieces. Then I  
sent some pictures of my work  
to a really great artist friend  
of mine, and really, in the end,  
he motivated/encouraged me  
to start sharing my work with  
people.

**AU:** How did your creative  
psyche change and evolve  
during that 10-year break?

LP: My artwork and themes  
became darker and more  
horror-oriented as I got older—  
based on mostly horror movies

or true crime.  
**AU:** Your signature style  
combines heavy lines and  
prominent shading with copious blood  
splatter. How did you  
inherit this unique style  
and make it your own?

LP: I learned it in high school  
actually. The style is "pop-art",  
which is altering a picture  
into just a totally black and  
white image—which would  
usually then be put onto a  
single color background. I  
think sometimes that works,  
but lots of times I felt the  
artwork was boring. So I  
started adding blood splatter,  
which for the most part fits  
my subject matter. It is a very  
satisfying feeling splattering  
red paint all over a canvas.

**AU:** Who are some of your  
favourite artists?

LP: I love Michael Hussar,  
Clive Barker, Daniel Horne,  
Jason Edmiston, Basil Gogos... There are so  
many. Artistically, my favourite directors are,  
again, Clive Barker, Lucio Fulci, Guillermo Del  
Toro... David Cronenberg probably would be up  
there.

**AU:** Where do you  
generally draw  
inspiration from?

LP: I get a lot of  
inspiration from other  
artists. There are so  
many great independent  
artists out there that you  
can find via Facebook  
or Instagram. I draw a  
lot from movies, mostly  
horror movies, which  
is my favourite subject  
matter. Without them I  
would have nothing to  
paint! And music makes  
everything flow. I listen  
to all types of stuff, but  
I paint best to GG Allin/  
Murder Junkies, Charles  
Manson is probably my  
favourite... Strapping  
Young Lad, Those Poor Bastards, Hank III. If I am  
doing a specific musician I try to listen to their  
music. Also to go back to inspirational/favourite  
directors, Fred Vogel rounds out my top five... love  
that guy.

**AU:** Describe your creative process.

LP: Once I have an idea or a theme, I look for a

ARTIST PROFILE

reference picture I like. I will usually go into paint  
shop and mess around with colour schemes.



shirts. So I decided to make my own designs. I did  
end up branching into adult tees as well, but I still  
think my designs really should be kids' shirts.



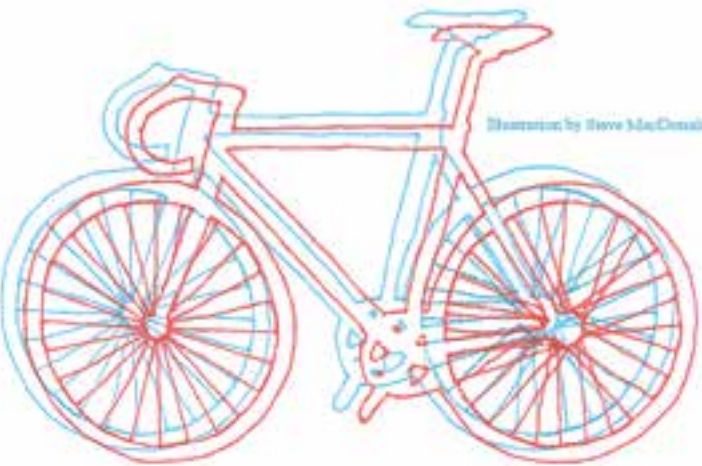
**AU:** Where do you come  
up with ideas for T-shirt  
designs?

LP: I usually just do some  
brainstorming for ideas,  
then start drawing them  
out see how they look. I  
have a huge sketchbook  
of designs. I just want  
them to be something I  
haven't seen before. I get  
a lot of weird looks from  
people at conventions  
about our kids' designs.  
But, for every five people  
that hate them, there  
is that one person that  
thinks they are hilarious. I  
like those people.

Stop by booths 56 & 57 in  
the Trade Show Room at  
this year's Calgary Horror

Con to meet the visionary behind Corrupted  
Canvas and Goblins N Ghouls, and check out  
some of his art. You can also follow Lee Palichuk  
on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/corruptedcanvasart> and <https://www.facebook.com/GhoulsnGoblins>.

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Interview by Michael Luis

Slates is a punk band from Edmonton. Their  
music explores both dark and light aspects  
with grinding guitars, lurching tempos and the  
occasional catchy refrain. They played a loud,  
sweaty show in a Victoria record store to support  
their new release on New Damage, *Taiga*, and  
Absolute Underground's Michael Luis was there  
to chat with guitarist/  
vocalist James Stewart.



**Absolute Underground:** Firstly,  
welcome to Victoria.  
This is your third time?

James Stewart: Yeah,  
third time. Dallas is a  
teacher, so when he has  
spring break, we have  
10 days, so we go from  
Edmonton to Victoria  
then out to Winnipeg,  
a 10 shows [in] 10 days  
kinda thing.

**AU:** You guys like  
playing here? Any  
good Victoria stories?

JS: Every time we've played here we've played a  
house show that our friend Troy put on, which is a  
lot of fun. The second house show we played, the  
cops showed up, which is pretty typical, except

they were like, "Eh, just  
turn it down," and then  
wandered off. "We'll be  
back in 20 minutes just  
to see if it's not too loud."  
I was like, "That's very  
reasonable." I don't know if  
that's typical of the police  
here, but it's not typical  
of the police anywhere else.

**AU:** I have no clue what  
the Edmonton punk  
scene is like. Who were you guys digging  
growing up and who's killing it right now?

JS: Edmonton's legendary band will always be  
SNFU. We get like eight months of winter, so  
everyone's just indoors playing songs, going to  
shows, waiting out the eternal darkness. So there's  
always lots of bands and stuff like that. There are a  
lot of bands right now. No Problem are just killing  
it there, a hardcore band, more 80s hardcore like

Adolescents, that style  
of stuff. They're going to  
Europe right away and  
they do lots of touring.  
There are so many...  
[also] Step Mothers and  
Switches.

**AU:** Let's talk about the  
new album, *Taiga*. You  
guys recorded it with  
the great Steve Albini.  
I've heard some stories,  
like him playing iPhone  
Scrabble for the whole  
session. What was it  
like working with him?

JS: It was amazing.  
He's very focused, with  
attention to detail. It's

not a surprise. We're very aware of his process, so  
we knew he's not a producer, he's an engineer.  
Through the tedium of recording, he was playing  
Candy Crush on his phone, and we all got hooked

on this stupid game. But once you  
start recording and you get studio  
insecurity, like, "Uh, was that too fast?"  
He'd have a few things he would say.  
Like, "Well, they're not my songs. I don't really  
know how they go," "It sounded good to me, but  
I'm notoriously easy to please." Or we'd be like,  
"Did it speed up at the end?" And he'd say, "Well,  
I've never taken a record back because it sped up



at the end." He puts that wall up right away.

**AU:** How does *Taiga* compare to previous  
releases?

JS: Honestly, it's pretty different. There was a  
lineup shift. Our bud Eric used to play guitar, and  
Stefan, who plays guitar now, played bass at the  
time. The first two albums are with Eric, and he  
had this hot hook sensibility. We planned to go  
on tour in Europe and he went to China to study  
kung fu, I think drunken fist kung fu.

**AU:** Oh, wild.

JS: He's crazy into kung fu, so he left the band to  
dedicate himself to that and be a bit more of a  
homebody. We still record all our demos with him;  
in a lot of ways he's still in the band. Because that  
pop sensibility was gone, we wanted to try more  
repetitive rhythms and just explore some darker

themes and more intense music. It has a different  
direction. It's exactly the type of music we want to  
be making right now.

**AU:** Yeah, to me it sounds a bit slower, a bit  
more brooding and darker, as you said, but it  
sounds like the same band.

JS: Yeah.

**AU:** It's not like you guys released a reggae  
album or something.

JS: Dub it out!

More information at [slatesband.ca](http://slatesband.ca)

Hansom Jeff

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**‘...Makin’ the Trains Run on Time’**

Interview with Tony Beaudoin by Charley Justice

Music styles work like this (says me): Band does something new / original / inspiring. That inspiration sparks a slew of similar acts, many of them on par with the originators. Scene happens. Everything's great. Inevitably the genre is popularized, saturated, bastardized, diluted, and ultimately spent. By that point, the pioneers have long moved on and given up in a fit of self-loathing, conscious of the corrupted monster they inadvertently helped spawn. There you go. It's dead. But then 20 years passes, and like clockwork, the style wakes up, shakes off the the hangover, kicks out the entropy and picks up from the high crest that broke two decades before. So, do the math - what happened 20 years ago? A new brand of punk took over the underground music world for a brief and intense period starting in about 1994. And though melodic punk rock hasn't been the most prominent style as of late, now is the scientifically calculated time for its Renaissance. Just watch. Actually, just listen to Union Stockyards. They just busted out blazing into the recently-buzzing Winnipeg punk scene with a debut album called *Tracks*, and it's worth paying attention to. We caught up with Stockyards' vocalist / loudmouth Tony Bedouin to verify...

**Absolute Underground:** I'm always pushy with the genre self-identification. So what are you guys, anyway?

Tony Beaudoin: Yeah, I've always found it tricky defining the sound of band that I'm a part of. Even more so with Union Stockyards, because we draw influences from so many many places. I guess that's why we refer to ourselves as melodic hardcore punk rock. It seemed to sum up the whole thing, even though the description is longer than anyone would like.

**AU:** Round of introductions, please!

TB: So, we have Jonny on drums. I first met him when he was playing in Standstill... his skills blew my mind! He also put some time in with a few other bands like The Undecided and Flesh Auger. Ryan is on guitar, although the dude can play fucking anything, and all of it extremely well. He started out in Kentucky Fried Children, but I first knew him as the drummer for One of These Days. He's been in tons of shit as well, like The Down and Out and alongside Jonny in Flesh Auger. Dave's on bass and his first band was Caution, in which he played bass and drums. Not at the same time, mind you, but he can pretty much pick up anything. Dave and I had our first project together in Saving Face. He also played in The Knuckledraggers for a brief period.

Then you have me. This is my second real band and I'm pretty much doing what a talentless hack does - scream, talk shit and attempt to sing from time to time.

**AU:** Great band name. It almost evokes an image of (or at least a guise of) maturity. Don't tell me you grew up...

TB: Forget that shit! There's no risk of me growing up anytime soon. We really wanted the name to be connected to Winnipeg. Jonny came up with it and we all loved it... it was probably the quickest band name decision of all time. Seeing the water tower on Marion where the Union Stockyards once stood was always a reminder to me of the kind of city we live in - a very blue collar kind of place.

**AU:** Not that you wear it on your sleeve, but I hear a smidge of local influence in there. Care to comment?

TB: Actually, I think I do wear it on my sleeve, considering I have a Red Fisher tattoo on my arm. We all grew up in the local Winnipeg music

hardcore punk rock. It seemed to sum up the whole thing, even though the description is longer than anyone would like.

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scene. Without trying to romanticize it too much, I think it can be safely said that it had a profound impact on all of us. Bands like I Spy, Propagandhi, Kittens, Malefaction and Meatrack showed me that it was possible to do this on your own. You could play shows, have fans and do it your way. It was a very liberating feeling.

**AU:** How was opening up for Prop? Teenage wet dream come true?

TB: Opening for Prop was completely fucking insane. Shit, it was completely fucking insane the day we started sharing a practice space with them. That all came about because Ryan and Jonny play hockey on a team called Caress of Steel with Beave and Hannah. I haven't been truly nervous about a show in a very long time, and then that show came along. Ryan sent out a group text and my head exploded. If you would

AU: Will you be taking this train on the road anytime soon?

TB: We'd like to tour next summer or fall, if possible.

More information at

<https://www.facebook.com/unionstockyards>

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PHOTO CREDIT: Joey Senft

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MUTANK

Broken Neck Radio sat down with bassist/vocalist Steven Rynolds of Montreal's Mutank shortly before the band won the Wacken Metal Battle Canada.

AU: Are you pumped for the show tonight?

Steven Rynolds: Yes it's very surreal, I feel like I'm not here to play. I feel like I'm here to watch a metal show, which is kind of true... I love Skullfist.

AU: How was your trip up to the Big Smoke? You guys came up from Montreal in a van, right?

SR: Yeah, the trip itself was fine, it was the night before... I had to be up at 6am and I'm not used

to that. I'm used to uh... well, getting up at 2pm is kinda early for me.

AU: Give the readers a brief history of how Mutank formed, where you're all from and what influences turned you onto music?

SR: The rest of us all knew each other from living in Newfoundland originally... we all moved to Montreal, where we met our drummer, in April 2013. Our drummer is from the Middle East but grew up in Montreal. That's where the album name *M.E.C.H. Metal* came from - it stands for Middle East Coast Heavy Metal. We just started playing and things came along really fast, we recorded the first album three to four months after we met. Our influences include the Big Four ... my songwriting is very influenced by Megadeth.

AU: That brings me to my next question... each band on this finale lineup brings their own unique brand of metal to the show... you're the only true thrash band. Do you feel that thrash is as popular today as it was in its inception?

SR: It's hard to measure that... the amount of thrash albums coming out now is incomparable to what it was back then. Back in the heyday of thrash, there was no Internet... so we can easily just say it's here to stay

and not going anywhere.

AU: Alright, let's talk about *M.E.C.H. Metal* - which song stands out the most for you and

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what really gets the crowd going?

SR: I would definitely say that "Mutank Minions" and "Heavy Hand" are the strongest songs... some seem to like "Corporate Trial" ... there are a lot of thrash influences in our songs.

AU: When the band started the Wacken Metal Battles, did you ever expect to make it to the finals? What are your expectations of Wacken, should you win tonight and get to play for such a large audience?

SR: I know we didn't expect to win... we always came with the mentality that we want to win and we are definitely going to try to win, but we didn't put too much pressure on ourselves... it's more like we came here to play and put on a good show for the people.

MUTANK continued on to play at Wacken Open Air in Germany this August.

More information at

<https://www.facebook.com/bonebrainsnotdemolishers>

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PHOTO CREDIT: Mihaela Petrescu

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# SHRED SESSION



## Lucas Hodges

Interview by Matt Gordon

Lucas is a local Victoria skater/ electrician/bro. He's always down to shred any random spot on the streets, which is why I like skating with him, even if he's usually lying on a bench or some grass acting sloth-like. He will do something good at most spots, but he seldom cares to ask someone to film him. He's a man of few words, but these photos Luke Connor managed to snap speak for themselves.

**Absolute Underground: How old were you when you started skating?**

Lucas Hodges: Nine years old

**AU: Do you remember the first time you stepped on a board?**

LH: Christmas day when I was nine.

**AU: Worst thing about skating?**

LH: I dunno.

**AU: Profound. Best thing about**

**skating?**

LH: Having a good sesh with your buddies.

**AU: Favourite skatepark?**

LH: Tsawwassen or Vic West.

**AU: Favourite trick to do?**

LH: Tre bomb.

**AU: Do you remember the three things about the Trox? (The Trox or "Trip Box" being basically any task you decide you must complete).**

LH: The Trox? They don't call it the Trox for nothing?

**AU: Haha, we're all in our own Trox, they don't call it the Trox for nothing, and the Trox self-manifests. What's a hard day's work like?**

LH: A hard day's work sucks.

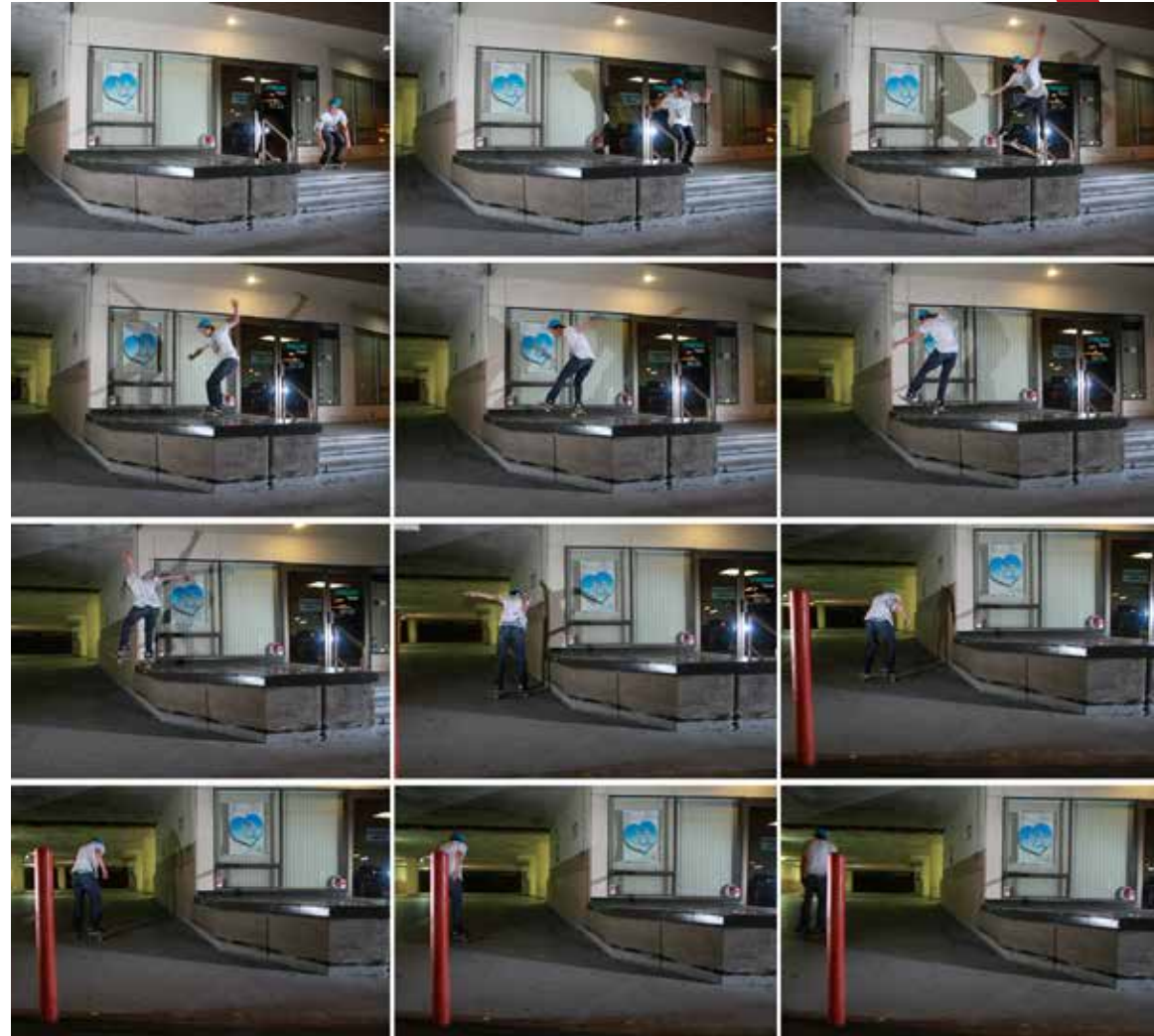
**AU: Dream skate session?**

LH: To skate somewhere foreign, maybe.

**AU: Favourite Trox?**

LH: Fab Trox, Cort's back yard.

**PHOTO CREDIT: Luke Connor**



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# GWAR LIVES! HAIL ODERUS!

With Absolute Underground is one issue shy, of our 10th anniversary, we have are dedicating this issue to the memory of Dave Brockie, someone who always had time for us, and had appeared on the cover a record 5 times! To properly give tribute to Oderus Urungus we teamed up with the creator of the original Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and owner of Heavy Metal magazine, Kevin Eastman, to memorialise one of the greatest characters in music.

With the Gwar-B-Q fast approaching, what is to be the public memorial of Oderus Urungus we decided to print this lost interview which took place last Fall, the last time we saw GWAR perform with the band’s founder.

It’s also great news to hear that GWAR will be continuing on with a cast of characters of the past filling in on vocal duties as well as the vocals will be spread out between the other band members, much like the Scumdogs of the Universe era.

## Oderus Urungus - The Lost Interview

Interview by Ira Hunter

What follows is Absolute Underground’s last interview with GWAR’s Oderus Urungus, conducted backstage at the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver, in October 2013.

**Absolute Underground: So it’s Thanksgiving, what do you have to be thankful for?**

Oderus Urungus: Fuck you, and fuck your holiday... You don’t even celebrate it on the same day that Americans do... Thanksgiving is for fucks.

Yeah, Canada, you know what they call you in America? America’s Hat! Isn’t that fucked up? You should invade us again, or them, or something... I don’t know, I’m confused... I think Steven Hawking is sexy. I think Woody Allen is sexy.

**AU: What do you have planned for Halloween?**

OU: I’m gonna get Woody to give me a woody. I don’t know how he’ll feel about it, he likes fucking twelve-year-old chicks and making self-indulgent slop.

**AU: Do you ever get dressed up in another costume for Halloween?**

OU: This is not a costume, fuck! These are my clothes. I’ve been wearing them ever since I was born, which was 50 billion years ago, I might add.

**AU: Tell me about the new album!**

OU: Actually, I’m going to get the cuttlefish to tell you about it... “Oh, the new album’s really great, Oderus, he’s really great on it...” Don’t listen to her.... the new album is *Battle Maximus*. New album,



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## Alestorm

Interview by Willow Gamberg

**Absolute Underground: Your new album, *Sunset on the Golden Age* – does that title refer to the gradual decline of piracy, like the eventual reclamation of Providence Island and Nassau?**

Christopher Bowes: Yep, all that sort of stuff. It sounds cool. I don’t know that much about pirates, I’ll be honest. Everything I know I learned from Johnny Depp and Wikipedia... I was just reading some article about that, thought it sounds cool, it’s got a nice ring to it. There’s no deeper meaning to it, it just sounds... pirate-y...

**AU: I last talked with you regarding the release of *Back Through Time* three years ago... What’s changed since then? Have you seen an evolution in your sound?**

CB: Yeah, since then we’ve expanded our lineup, we got ourselves a second keyboard player because we realized that the music we were making was getting really really over-the-top symphonic... and we didn’t want to become one of those bands that just plays the backing tracks, so we decided to just add keyboards.

We realized we can make our sound a lot more crazy and wild, so I guess that’s the main thing that’s happened. Everything’s getting bigger, we’re touring places we’ve never been before... Since that album we’ve shot a DVD in Australia, we’ve been to South America, we’ve been all over the place.

**AU: Yeah, *Live at the End of the World*... how did that come about? Any crazy stories from the filming process?**

CB: Basically the first time we went down there, it was June 2010, and we’d got this offer to do a tour of Australia and we were like, “Awesome!” It was all done on a complete shoestring budget - they paid our flights but that was about it, there was no money. And when most bands tour Australia, it’s disastrous, they play to 50 people and everyone loses money and they never get invited back. We played and for some reason there was like 1000 people who came to see us at some of the shows... everyone was like, “What the hell?!” even the promoters... No one gets receptions like that in Australia. We just thought it was normal because it was our first experience. We got invited back the next year, and we realized we’ve got something special going on in Australia.... so we thought, “Let’s

make this official, let’s get our DVD done there.” We shot the main show in Melbourne... such a lovely place in the world. Most bands, when they film a DVD, it’s either in their hometown, or it’s footage from some crappy festival in Germany or something... so we thought we’d do it differently - go somewhere else in the world and party. I’m very pleased with how it went.

**AU: On my end, I’m hearing a little more of the death metal influence and a little less folk metal... Was this intentional?**

CB: We kind of realized that we don’t have to pretend we’re a folk metal band or a power metal band - we’re not stuck in a genre. We don’t have to pander to fans who love Odin or guitar solos, so we started adding these sort of surf rock riffs in, and some metalcore breakdowns and random stuff like that, and we realized in the studio that our keyboard player, Elliot, is really good at these screamed vocals, so we got him to basically cover the entire album with screams. It’s definitely a more extreme metal edge, we’re not some pansy flower metal band. I think there’s a cool appeal to that sort of thing. It’s definitely expanded the sound a lot, doing that.

**AU: The time gap between each of your four albums has been progressively one year longer... are you slowing down or just putting more time and**

**thought (or touring) into each one?**

CB: I guess most of it is touring, when we did our first album we didn’t tour much... we just did the UK and Europe. Then after that we started touring America, then Australia and now we’re touring weird places like Japan and South America and South Africa, Israel and all this mad stuff... so a lot of it’s that, we have more stuff in between that we don’t have to resort to making a new album. But also as a fan of music, I used to always hate going to see one of my favourite bands live, then realizing that they’ve released a

new album and I don’t know any of the songs, and they’re not playing any of the old favourite songs ... I appreciate that a lot of people like our classic material, so we want to tour this as much as we can and make sure everyone has a chance to hear [the old stuff] before we start adding new songs... Even when we do write new songs, we’re still going to play a varied set list.

**AU: There was a song on that album titled “Scraping the Barrel”, in which you respond to people telling you you’ll run out of material... has that been an issue for the new album?**

CB: Not at all. Like I said, we’ve had this whole

realization that we can expand on what we do with regards to genre, so musically we’ve had a lot more space this time around. Lyrically, we’ve descended into insanity... there’s a song on this album about pirates traveling to the future to kill an army of undead space squid, there’s a song about a colony of bees who live underwater... one of the songs is actually secretly a recipe for cheeseburgers. It’s always going to be pirates in madcap situations, so like on our next album I want to have a song about pirates fighting Batman... why not?

**AU: You’ve toured in Canada before – how was it? What are you looking forward to this time?**

CB: I like going to Canada, it’s fun. You’re all such lovely people. But your alcohol is too expensive... We have a show in Montreal in a couple of weeks, so I have to remember to import my own alcohol for that, otherwise my wallet will cry. We don’t get to go there very much, and we always seem to miss out BC, like Vancouver always seems to get skipped... We’ll come back to Canada.

**AU: You’re headlining a “PirateFest” tour this year... other pirate metal bands seem to be coming out of the woodwork, so to speak. Why do you think metal and piracy so complement each other?**

CB: Piracy is all about getting drunk and fucking shit up... it’s a very independent-minded pursuit. There’s all these parallels in the alternative, underground nature of metal, it’s kind of a natural thing, even more so than all these bands that sing

about Vikings and things... that’s the thing I don’t get about Viking metal, cause usually a lot of metal is anti-Christian or anti-religious, but here’s all these Viking bands praising imaginary gods... But yeah, this whole pirate thing is great, all these bands have suddenly appeared and I’d like to think that at least some of them are inspired by us. So we thought, “Let’s take them all on tour and have one night of nothing but bands singing about pirates!” I can imagine all the crowds coming dressed up in stupid costumes, there’s going to be a lot of rum drunk... it’s going to be a laugh, I can’t wait for that one at all.

**AU: What are your plans for the future? More albums and tours?**

CB: All that stuff, we’re going to keep going forever, we’re not splitting up anytime soon. When the album comes out we’re going to tour Europe and the UK very extensively, we’re going to go to Japan, and then next January/February, we think we might head across the Atlantic and entertain you lovely fellas in Canada and the

USA. So yeah, expect to see us on your doorsteps sometime next year. Repeat, rinse, make new albums.

**AU: Final words?**

CB: Be nice people. Do what your parents tell you. Eat your vegetables... you don’t want to get scurvy.

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# Reaver

Interview with Michael Gignac and Brandon Reynolds of Reaver

By Casey Lazar

Reaver was one of the leaders in the Victoria metal scene until they broke up several years ago. They're reforming this September, so Absolute Underground sat down with a couple of them to ask a few questions.

**AU: How long has it been since Reaver's last appearance?**

Michael Gignac: Way too long! I think the last one was in January of 2012. It feels like a lifetime ago!

**AU: Can you describe Reaver's sound?**

MG: I think we're hugely influenced by the Scandinavian melodic death metal scene of the 90s.

Brandon Reynolds: Our sound is changing over time, though. Things are getting more technical and progressive. We take note of what people respond to live and try to expand on that.

**AU: What have you been up to during your time away?**

MG: Just focusing on non-musical aspects of life. I needed to wait for my passion for music to return. Losing band members and replacing them is such a drain. It took a while before I had the energy to commit fully to getting back out there. Now, with this lineup, I feel it's worth it to devote tons of my energy to Reaver.

BR: Music-wise, I've been doing Llama God (Lamb of God tribute) for fun, which is good for scratching the itch, but isn't as satisfying as playing originals. I've missed it!

**AU: You have some new members. Tell us about them!**

second album and continue playing shows.

**AU: What changes would you like to see in Victoria's metal scene?**

MG: I hope that we can expand the number of venues willing to take on quality shows. It also wouldn't hurt if there were more bands popping up in all sorts of metal subgenres.

**AU: If you could share the stage with any band, who would it be?**

MG: That's tough! I guess I'd have to say Soilwork or Dark Tranquillity. I feel like I've been listening to them for my whole life.

**More information at**

<https://www.facebook.com/ReaverMetal>

<http://www.reverbnation.com/reaverofficial>

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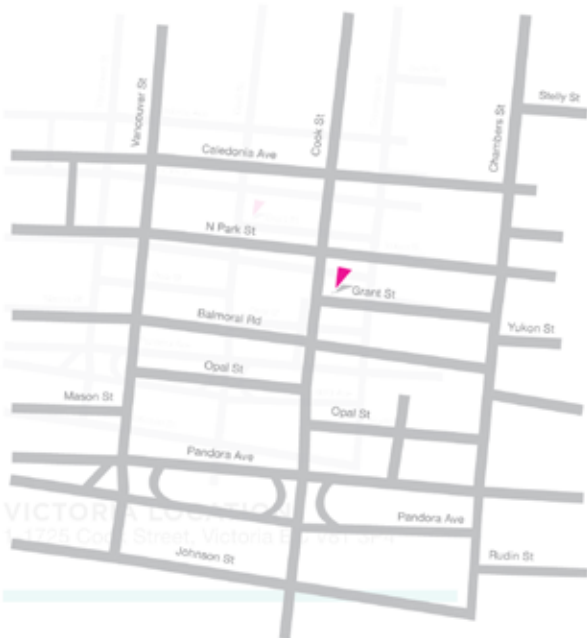
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## Alex Webster

*Of Cannibal Corpse and Conquering Dystopia*

Interview by Lacey Paige

One of two surviving original members of perhaps the longest-standing and most influential death metal band in the history of the genre, Alex Webster has been with Cannibal Corpse since the band's very inception. Webster is universally regarded as one of the most technically sound, undeniably gifted bass players to permanently etch his imprint in the realm of heavy music. In addition to shredding bass for Cannibal Corpse, Webster has also played in several other bands, including his current side project, Conquering Dystopia. But unbeknownst to the casual 'Corpse listener, he also dabbles in a bit of technical writing in his downtime. Webster released his first instructional guide, *Extreme Metal Bass* through Hal Leonard Publishing in 2011, and is currently helming an intermediate music theory column for Britain's *Bass Guitar Magazine*.

In 2013 the band celebrated a quarter century of carnage with the superlative 13-disc *Dead Human Collection: 25 Years of Death Metal* box set, and was subsequently inducted into the prestigious Buffalo Music Hall of Fame on October 3rd. They are currently touring across North America as part of the Rockstar Mayhem Festival, sharing the stage with an onslaught of distinctive metal bands, including Korn, Trivium, Mushroomhead and Suicide Silence. With the upcoming release of their thirteenth studio album, *A Skeletal Domain*, it doesn't look like Cannibal Corpse will be crawling back into the grave any time soon.

Webster recently took some time out of his

busy touring schedule to chat with Absolute Underground, marking one of the major highlights of this writer's pseudo-career as a film and music journalist.

**Absolute Underground: Let's take a moment to reflect on 26 years of Cannibal Corpse.**

Alex Webster: We're really happy that it's all been possible. And we're very grateful to our fans for making it possible. Really, it's their support that has enabled us to go as long as we have. So we're very grateful, and it's all a big surprise, really. You can't expect to have a 26-year career when you start out. You really can't even expect to have a two-year career.

**AU: How do you think metal has changed for the better and for the worse over the past three decades?**

AW: I think there has been more good changes than bad. Some things are kind of troubling. When I hear about bands playing with multi-backing tracks I think that's going a little far. I think that the modern technology that has enabled people to record more cheaply and make better-sounding records for less might be getting abused a little

bit. But in general, I'd say that the overall metal scene has had a lot of good things going on over the past 30 years. There's just a lot more types of metal out there. There seem to be a lot of people that are open-minded about listening to more than one type, and I think that's good.

**AU: What are you currently listening to?**

AW: I really like Marty Friedman's new album. I listen to Revocation a lot; I think they're an amazing band. I like the new Judas Priest record that just came out; that's a killer record. I'm into a lot of old-school stuff and newer stuff. But I think Revocation is going to be a big one over the next few years because it's such well-written music and it's so well executed, and it's still total metal.

**AU: How's Mayhem Fest going so far?**

AW: We've actually changed buses about five times on this tour. We've only been out here for about three weeks. And four of those changes happened in the first week. So we've really had some difficulties with bus repair. Anybody who has toured knows that the bus becomes your home, so when you're jumping from bus to bus because they keep breaking down or keep having to be taken away from one reason or the other, it's definitely challenging.

**AU: A *Skeletal Domain* drops in September. Can you give us a bit of preamble to the new album?**

AW: It was recorded earlier this year at Audiohammer Studios in Sanford, FL. Mark Lewis was the producer and engineer, and did the mastering as well. I think that the album turned out really well. It's another Cannibal Corpse album; it's still death metal but I do think that there are enough differences there that even people who have been following us for a long time will still find it fresh and exciting.

**AU: *Domain* marks the parting of ways from Erik Rutan, who produced the last three Corpse albums. Why the decision to opt out of working with Rutan and join forces with Mark Lewis?**

AW: We did three albums with Erik and we thought all three of them turned out great. We really just wanted to mix things up and try something a little different. We're totally satisfied with the work Erik did for us. We liked some of the work that we heard Mark do—Devil Driver's *Beast* album is one that I thought sounded excellent, and the Decide album [*To Hell With God*]. He's done a lot of great stuff. It just seemed like a natural thing to give him a try next after Erik.

**AU: As someone who is considered one of the greatest metal bassists of all time, how do you go about challenging yourself, evolving as a musician, and yet still staying true to your signature sound and style?**

AW: I try to not be too concerned with following rules when it comes to music and bass playing. For a long time I had kind of given myself a rule that I don't use an overdrive pedal. And then I started thinking, 'Well, why?' If I could do something to make myself sound heavier, why shouldn't I do it? So I added one of those into the mix over the past couple years and it's worked out really well for me—from the *Torture* album and now the new album. As far as sound goes, I'm trying to be open-minded and be willing to try new things. It's easy to get stuck in a rut if

you have been doing something a long time. I try to always keep improving my sound. I think becoming complacent is bad for any musician, so I try to avoid that.

**AU: How do you guys always manage to outdo yourselves with the level of darkness and depravity you deliver in spades with each and every album?**

AW: As far as lyrics and stuff go, I don't think we're necessarily trying to outdo what we've done before. We're just trying to make interesting stories. Sometimes they are really gross and over the top, and other times they're just sort of dark and more of a psychological kind of horror. We're up for any kind of dark, violent or horrifying subject, but we don't necessarily try to outdo what we've done before at this point in our careers on that end of things. Musically, on the other hand, we are trying to make things darker and more sinister sounding than we ever have—or, alternatively, maybe making something sound more aggressive and violent.

**AU: The new album art is a lot tamer than previous album covers. Is this a result of having been censored so much in the past?**

AW: I don't know if any of the censorship

concerns came into the equation. I mean, the record label was certainly happy to see that they weren't going to have to be that concerned with that end of things for once. We definitely did have problems with *Torture*'s artwork; that album [cover] is quite gory. So I'm sure the record label is happy that they're not going to have to deal with that this time around. But there's no say in whether or not they won't have to next time. We're going to do what we want to do and if the cover is too gory, we'll just have to figure out something, put a sleeve over it or whatever.

**AU: It's been a few years since Cannibal**

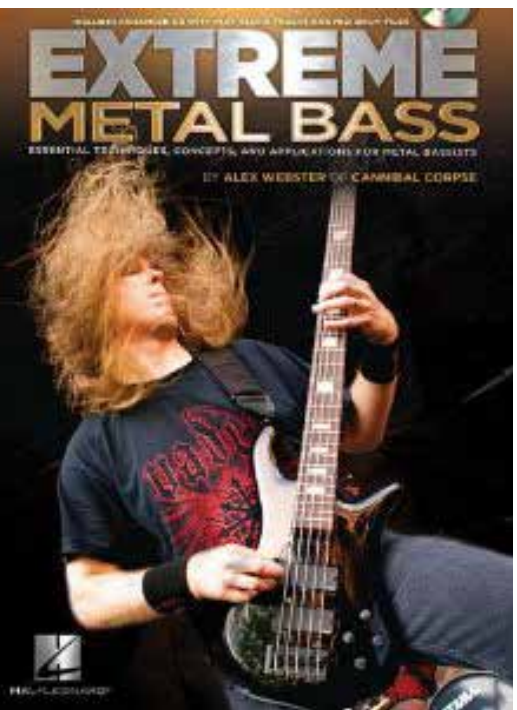
**Corpse has done an extensive Canadian tour. Are there any plans to do so in the near future?**

AW: We don't really have anything booked yet. We're playing Toronto on the Mayhem Fest, but beyond that, no we don't really have any plans at the moment. I do think that they're going to try to set up a big North American tour probably in the beginning of next year. Where that's going to go I can't say for sure, but we would certainly like to come up to Canada and do a bunch of shows up there. I like it when we can go all the way across [the country].

**More information at**

<http://www.cannibalcorpse.net/>

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## Crop King Seeds

### Absolute Underground: What was the genesis of this business idea?

We started Crop King Seeds because the timing was right for Canada to have a legitimate marijuana seed company. People's attitudes towards cannabis have quickly changed as a result of legalization in Colorado and Washington State. Our goal was not only to build a marijuana seed company, but also to create a company that gives back to the legalization movement across Canada and the world.

### AU: What are your views on the legalization and decriminalization of marijuana?

The cannabis plant should never have been made illegal in the first place. Currently, the only news that comes out on the topic is in favour of medical benefits and how legalization is the way to go. Our goal is to continue the fight and let due process within the Canadian political system take its course. It's a shame that the USA now leads the world in legalization, while Canada must wait until we can vote for Trudeau and the Liberals in 15 months. Electing a Conservative government has changed our world reputation for being a tolerant country that puts fair policy ahead of punishment for using a plant.

### AU: What makes Crop King Seeds unique?

We started our company with the goal of revolutionizing what the marijuana industry should become in the future. We started with selecting excellent genetics and built our company by creating amazing packaging and exciting merchandise, instead of seeds being sold in little Ziploc baggies behind the counter or through amateur websites with zero customer service. Being out in the open and communicating with our customers and retail stores has allowed us to grow faster than we expected. Everyone is growing these days... your next door neighbours' aunt is growing, and her neighbour is growing.

### AU: Where can people purchase your products?

Our seeds are available for purchase online and at over 100 stores across Canada. We have goals in place to be sold next to the carrot seeds in Canadian Tire and Home Depot within 24 months after legalization is official. If these retailers can sell beer- and wine-making kits, then they sure as hell can sell Crop King Seeds.

### AU: What strains do you have available?

Just like the wine industry has chardonnays and merlots, the cannabis industry has many varied strains available. We carry the full gamut from sativa to indica, new-age hybrids such as autoflowering ruderalis, and a dwarf plant. Our best-selling strains are the traditional ones like White Widow, Purple Kush, and Super Silver Haze. Many customers are willing to experiment with newer varieties. Some of the new strains are advanced to the point where you can basically just germinate and plant your seeds, then sit back and let Mother Nature do her thing.

### AU: How do you source your seeds?

Twice a year we will go on a tour of Canada and Europe to find seed producers that can guarantee us strong and stable genetics in viable seeds with high germination rates. Our autoflowers come from Spain, where they have perfected these genetics. From there, we purchase in large quantities and send the finished product to an independent lab for testing. The cannabis seed industry is very similar to wine grapes, where many vineyards import grapes to offer their customers different varieties. We also travel to find the strains that people can't get from their local dispensary or dealer.

### AU: Is there a labeling system that tells the consumer the effects and THC or CBD levels of their plant?

All of our genetic strains are sent to a lab on Vancouver Island where they are tested for THC and CBD levels. Then we openly share them with our customers on our website so they know what they are getting.

### AU: What is your company motto?

"World Class Cannabis Seeds" is our motto. Although we are not known all around the world as of yet, we hope to be the next Seagram or Molson to come from Canada.

### AU: How does marijuana make the world a better place?

Marijuana, and the hemp plant in general, is the most beneficial plant to humans on the planet. We are just seeing the beginning of what will become many spinoff industries from this one plant. Hemp clothing, oils, medicines, fertilizers, building products, food, and recreational enjoyment can all come from the cannabis plant, through which we will soon see a new industrial and sustainable revolution.

### AU: What's the most amazing thing about your product that everyone should know?

Not only do we have superior stable genetics, but what we are doing differently is we take it up a level by offering superior customer service. We see walk-in customers at our head office and retail store, we have livechat support on our website available 24/7, and we have toll-free phone lines open eleven hours per day. We truly care about our customers and are dedicated to their success with our products.

### AU: What will be the ultimate success for you?

Our ultimate success will be when we see our products in a big box store. That doesn't mean that we will be so big that we see our customers as order numbers only, we will always maintain our small grassroots business core values, with personalized customer service. We want to get our product into the hands of the people who you would least expect to start growing, like the

teacher, the fireman, and the retired patient that wants to get off of prescription meds.

### AU: I love the new open and positive vibe surrounding marijuana. What would be your utopian society?

## BUSINESS PROFILE

It's interesting because as governments take away more and more of our freedoms each day, marijuana legalization is the only thing they are giving back to us that we will be able to enjoy. Cannabis allows you to open your mind and question things like government policies, that is important for our growth and development as a society.

### AU: Tell us about the commercial you produced for Crop King Seeds.

Yes, we just released the world's first marijuana commercial, which can be viewed on YouTube and our website. We hired a production company in Vancouver and local actors to play the parts. MSNBC picked it up recently as it pokes fun at the alcohol industry while shedding light on marijuana actually presenting a safer alternative.

### AU: What can people do to help get ganja legalized all across Canada?

Well, here in B.C. you can start with helping the Sensible B.C. Campaign, and if you are in other parts of Canada you can keep lobbying your local MLA. The main thing will be to vote Liberal next year. If you are in the USA, you will see it happen state by state, starting with Oregon and Alaska this November.

### AU: Final words for fans of weed?

Every day that we come to work, we talk with our customers and retail partners across Canada and get very encouraging feedback. We can see that what we are doing is similar to the Seagram and Molson families back in the early 1900s - we're anti-prohibition. We know that our customers are in safer hands with our product than they would be leaving the liquor store with a case of beer, or pharmacy with a new prescription. We want our customers to know that they are not only getting a great product, but that they are part of a movement and revolution that will soon be won.

More information at [www.crokingseeds.com](http://www.crokingseeds.com)







## Downtown Brown

Interview by Mr. Plow

**Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?**

Neil P: Neil P, AKA Neebo ... guitar/vocals for Downtown Brown

**AU: Describe Downtown Brown in one sentence for those who have never heard of you.**

NP: Punk/funk/metal/experimental rock for fans of eclectic, weird, fun music.

**AU: Your latest release, which came out last year, was produced by Norwood Fisher of Fishbone. How did that come about?**

NP: We met him while touring with Fishbone in 2011. Norwood dug the band and shortly after offered to manage us. In 2012, we signed with him and he produced our newest album in 2013.

**AU: Are you honorary Juggalos because you opened for Insane Clown Posse, or are you legit Juggalos?**

NP: I listened to ICP in high school. They were unavoidable [for someone] growing up in metro Detroit. They are the kings of self-promotion; they created an empire. Mad respect for those dudes. I used to get high as hell and fall on the floor laughing to 'Beverly Kills' and 'Carnival of Carnage'.

I was a fan before the 'Juggalo' thing even existed. I kinda grew out of it after high school, but I always had a special place in my heart for those dudes. In 2011, they offered us an opening slot and we gladly took it. We've played two gatherings and

opened for them twice. The Juggalos don't really like Downtown Brown, but if those dudes ever offer us another show, I'm gonna say yes!

**AU: You tour like crazy. How is the touring life these days?**

NP: It's tough, but sometimes it's totally awesome ... like when we get to tour with bands like Fishbone, Peelander Z, The Adicts and Dead Kennedys. Our band is really great at entertaining an audience... the only problem is when there's no audience there to entertain... so I guess it depends on the show/tour. It's getting better... more people are getting hip to what we do... it's just a gradual thing. Being a small band has its ups and downs.

**AU: Any fun tour stories you wish to share?**

NP: Too many to list... one time by accident we became Chuck Mosley of Faith No More's backing band, that was a trip. One time we jammed with Dee Snider. One time we stayed in a house where the dog had mange and the entire place

stunk like rotting flesh. One time a dude in Texas convinced us he could levitate his child. One time we got kicked off Warped Tour.

**AU: What does the future hold for you? More touring or another album?**

NP: Only time will tell... We plan on playing over 100 shows in 2014, don't know if we're going to slow down after that. Maybe we'll just quit... get

office jobs, who the fuck knows?

**AU: Since you are from Michigan, do you ever stop at the Tim Horton's there?**

NP: Of course! My mom gets sick and I grab her chicken noodle soup from the drive-thru. I used to get their ham and cheese sandwiches back in the day, and dip them in ranch. My girlfriend is also notorious for going to the drive-thru and ordering one Timbit. I think it's their version of a donut hole... and she orders JUST ONE.

**AU: Name three things you know about Canada.**

NP: Avril Lavigne + Nickelback

Bryan Adams

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## Absolute Film Reviews



**Teen Ape Vs. The Monster Nazi Apocalypse**  
Troma

This film was directed by Chris Seaver (Hi-8, I Spit Chew on Your Grave) and stars Nicola Fiore (Mr. Bricks: A Heavy Metal Murder Musical) as Thunder Ambrosia, Chris Seaver as Bone Jack and, my personal favourite, Debbie Rochon (Terror Firmer) as Evonushka. In 1945, the United States' most skilled team of mercenaries, the P.I.A. (Paranormal Investigation Agency), are sent into Nazi Germany to kill Hitler before he takes over the world. Lead by Bone Jack, these warriors take the Nazis head-on and eventually put a stop to Hitler's evil reign, but Evonushka, Hitler's lover, escapes and vows to continue on in his absence. Bone Jack and his crew stumble upon a failed Nazi experiment and decide to take him home with them. Flash forward 60 years to present times where Evonushka, along with some

demon followers, use Hitler's blood to bring him back from the dead. Bone Jack and Teen Ape are forced to get the gang back together for one more adventure to try to finish off Hitler once and for all. This film is a shining example of why I love Troma! The extremely low budget, amazingly bad acting and ridiculously fake but hilariously funny special effects leave this fanboy wanting more. Chris pays homage to a handful of films from Hellboy to E.T., and captures the Troma spirit exceptionally well. I have to mention Debbie Rochon's amazing performance as Hitler's love toy. She is one of the greatest independent actors working today and, with over 230 films under her belt, it's not hard to see why. Teen Ape is full of blood,

boobs and beasts, and at no point does it take itself seriously. I had a good laugh watching it and I'm sure any morbid Troma fan will too! Teen Ape vs. The Monster Nazi Apocalypse is available in a Troma three-pack along with Attack of the Tromagot and The Secret of the Magic Mushroom, so you are really getting some bang for your buck.

-Cody No Teeth

**The Big Gundown**  
Grindhouse Releasing

Mr. Ugly is back! Lee Van Cleef stars in Sergio Sollima's spaghetti western masterpiece, The Big Gundown. Lee Van Cleef (The Good, The Bad And The Ugly) is a well-known gunman with a knack for finding outlaws that don't want to be found. He is hired by a wealthy landowner to hunt down the suspected rapist/murderer of a

twelve-year-old girl and bring him to justice. Tomas Milian (Django Kill, Don't Torture a Duckling) plays Cuchillo, the man in question, who is on the run trying to make his way back to Mexico. The film has a sort of cat-and-mouse story, with the two main characters outsmarting each other throughout the ninety-minute run time. There are some great moments between the two antagonists that all lead up to the "big gundown" at the climax of the film. Cleef and Milian start off hating each other but, by the end of the film, they have to put their differences aside for one common goal. This film often gets compared to some of Sergio Leno's westerns, but I find it has a style all its own. The score is amazing and the humour is really great and something you don't normally find in the western genre. Plus, you have the powerhouse actors - Lee Van Cleef and Tomas Milian both deliver outstanding performances. The screenplay was written by Sergio Donati (Once Upon A Time in the West) with a soundtrack by the legendary composer Ennio Morricone, and it was directed by Sergio Sollima (Run, Man, Run). This collection has two different versions of the film - one on Blu-Ray, one on DVD - plus the soundtrack CD and liner notes written by C. Courtney Taylor and Gregey Hubal. The Big Gundown is packed with supplements, extras and goodies that should satisfy any hardcore spaghetti western fanatic. Italian cinema can sometimes be forgotten by most mainstream fans, but there are some really amazing films that need to be seen by everyone. The Big Gundown is right up there with Django and the Man With No Name trilogy as being one of the great Italian exploitation films to come out in the 60s and 70s.

-Cody No Teeth

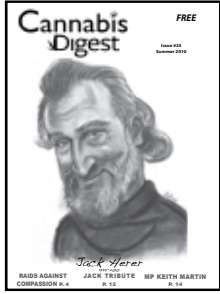
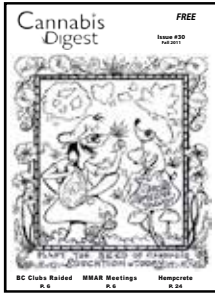
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## Absolute Live Reviews

**Cheech & Chong's Up in Smoke Tour with WAR**

There's been a musical "war" brewing in the tour that features Cheech & Chong since probably last year, when this pairing started working together. Old-time fans wanting to see more of the comedy duo will get more music instead. It'd be nice to see the show turned around, but the likelihood any changes are going to be made to this act is slim. Cheech Marin and Tommy Chong are in fine form with the stand-up routines they made famous. From "Dave" to their Christmas tribute, "Santa Claus and His Old Lady," these two are just as cantankerous on stage as ever.

A bit of a biography by Chong's wife, Shelby, was offered to bring people up to speed in what happened over the last thirty years, but that felt unneeded. The time they spent on stage was short, lasting for about half an hour, and after the laughs died down, the band returned. The music of War took control throughout the night. Led by original founding band member, Leroy "Lonnie" Jordan, this multi-talented crew of musicians rocked the house down with an impressive set list that featured their best hits like "Low Rider" and "Why Can't We Be Friends."

The fun really didn't begin until Chong's Blind Melon Chitlin' persona came on stage, so that everyone could jam along to some classic Delta blues-inspired moments. Stanley Behrens (harmonica), David Uruquidi (saxophone), Stuart Ziff (guitar), Francisco Tomaselli (bass), Marcos Reyes (percussion), and Sal Rodriguez (drums) were particularly notable this night. To hear the sweet sounds of Rodriguez singing "Summer" is certainly the highlight of the night's show for those wanting some easy-listening mixed in. For people who love it loud, Cheech & Chong showed that they were definitely in fine form with "Born in East L.A."

But the night couldn't be made complete without some tribute to

the proto-punk movement. Cheech made the night a rowdy affair when he popped on stage in his Alice Bowie outfit - a pink tutu and mouse ears ensemble - to play a very grunge hit, "Earache My Eye." Although he was lip-syncing, this moment brought the house down.

Although War won the night, Cheech and Chong still reigned supreme with a great trip down memory lane. This show will be returning to the city where they first met, Vancouver, in late July before continuing down to the States for the remainder of the year.

-Ed Sum

**Bloody Betty Burlesque**  
Logan's Pub, Victoria, BC  
July 18th, 2014

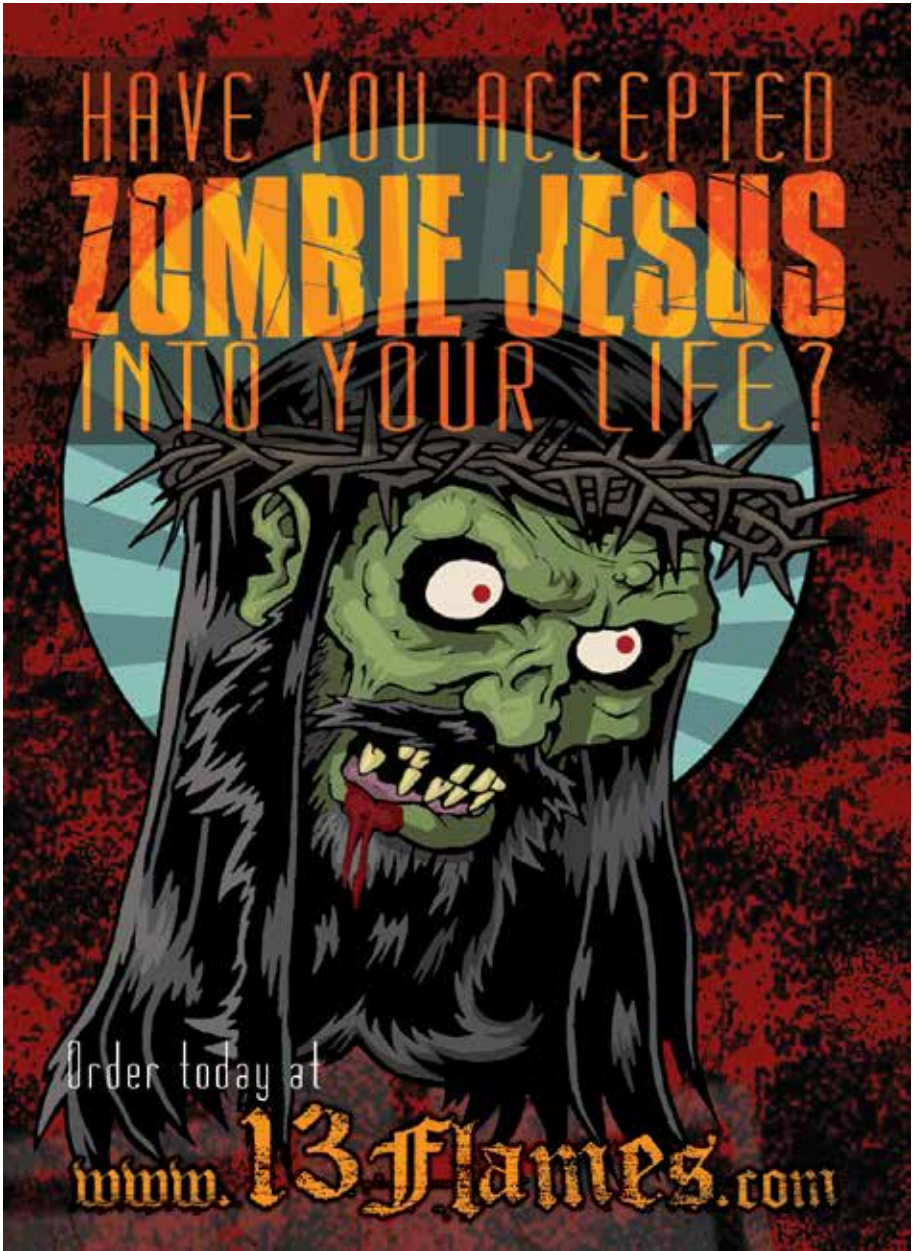
If you're into naked babes, punk rock, jean-clad, studded everything (everywhere) and gore-lesque, this Bloody Betty show would have outright

blown your mind open and splattered it on the wall. Featuring a performance to open up the night by Suicide Stacey, followed by some thrash-y music by Hearts of Stone and The Deadly Sins, the crowd got hectic pretty fast. In between the acts, a man dressed as a police officer with leather spandex short-shorts and a bad attitude bossed around his own personal slaves to clean up the fake blood, vomit and scattered kinky clothes of the female performers whilst insulting his own targets in the crowd. To end the event, the



infamous Bloody Betty stumbled onto the stage foaming at the mouth in a puke-splattered nightgown, sex hair and smeared makeup, to perform with her band, Daddy Issues. Provoking the crowd with disturbing lyrics and fast-paced instrumentals, they initiated a mosh pit immediately. Limbs flew into faces, shoes were tossed in every direction and Bloody Betty screamed into the microphone while gouging at her own arm with various needles she had strapped to her legs. A horrific sight to prepare us for the end performance: Bloody Betty's striptease. As soon as Daddy Issues ended, Betty reappeared onstage without her bandmates and performed the 'degenerate spectacle' she's known for: her gore-lesque act that left her naked, bloody and bruised body standing in front of a crowd confused at their own arousal, yet wide-eyed in disturbed awe. It truly was an experience unlike any other I've ever witnessed at Logan's Pub.

- Alex Snow





# Absolute Album Reviews

**Channel Zero – Kill All Kings**  
**Metal Blade**

Channel Zero is a metal/hard rock band from Belgium. They were huge in the 90s and were apparently Belgium's answer to Metallica. They quit at the height of their career and didn't do much, it seems, until 2010 when they did a bunch of reunion shows. Their drummer then died in the middle of recording, so they got Ray Mayorga from Soulfly and finished that album, along with another one called *Kill All Kings*, which is out now on Metal Blade.

It starts off well enough... a lot of thrash has an 80s thing going on, but not here; it sounds totally 90s right off the start. The first couple of tracks are decent musically, but it feels pretty dated in the less-than-entertaining way. I just feel like I'm listening to this in 1997. Track four, "Digital Warfare", is even about how dangerous the Internet is... I think. It continues on like this, the music is alright but it doesn't push any limits. The riffs on each song are good, so maybe it's the lyrics that are bugging me? The title track is number seven, and it's all about how America is the Illuminati and conducts terrorist acts around the world. Now, that may be true, but the arrangement in the song just makes me feel like they're going to reference Netscape in the next verse. Track eleven, "Duisternis" is a pretty good song right to the end. It doesn't do anything special, but it is a fast-tempo, full-out song that sounds better than the rest of the album.

I don't like sitting on bands at all, especially since these guys can play better than me and have done more. The problem is that they don't sound like they did anything to change or improve since they disbanded in 1997. I'm not sure how many people can remember, but I don't think that was a good year for music. I just think that they could have done something to freshen up the band so that they don't sound like a cover band at a bar that was cool 15 years ago. They can play well, but I don't like how they play.

-Michael F. Carnage

**King of Asgard – Karg**  
**Metal Blade**

King of Asgard is a four-piece Viking metal band from Sweden. They have released a few albums over the last ten years. Most of the songs take inspiration from Viking sagas and tales of battles, so they are typical for the genre but I think they do it better than most. As some of you may remember, I became a bit of a fanboy when I reviewed their last album back in the old days of 2012. I'm sure nothing is going to change as the last two albums released by this group were pretty wicked.

Even in the first few songs, I could tell *Karg* has the making of another great album, beginning with strong delivery and storytelling. Good guitar tone flows through the tracks and makes you feel like the drums are hoofbeats. Karl Beckman's voice sounds like you're walking through a forest with crunchy snow under your feet. Track three, "Highland Rebellion", changes the pace a little bit with harmonics throughout, but it still picks up its pace and gets pumping. There's not a lot of what I would call soloing in these songs, but the twin guitar work is really solid. "Omnia" has an epic feel, with a piano intro that breaks up the middle of the album. Then it's back to the battle and the saga. The bonus track at the end is called "Total Destruction", and kind of has a punk rock feel to it. It's not in the same vein as the rest of the album, but I like it as a good finisher.

As expected, I love this album and will continue to be a gushy little fanboy about it. It's hard not to like it for a lot of reasons. The album as a whole isn't too long, and flows past in one enjoyable sitting. If you're a fan of just metal in general, start by checking out past songs from these guys online, they're everywhere. This album follows up where the last one ended, with songs that will make you feel like you're running through the snow with a sword in your hand, ready to battle and die like all of the heroes who did the same in past years.

-Michael F. Carnage

**Equilibrium – Erdentempel**  
**Nuclear Blast**

Equilibrium is a German metal band that is called everything from folk to power to just plain epic metal. They're putting out their fourth and newest release this month. From listening to the back catalogue, I have begun to realize all their lyrics are in German. There's nothing wrong with that, but I can only speak in fake, angry German so I'll just have to guess what all the songs are about. I've also noticed that every album has had lineup changes in it and this one is no different, featuring a new bassist and guitarist.

*Erdentempel* all starts with an intro of under a minute, but the one word you think of with this short start is "epic". "Was Lange Wahrt" just jumps right into it, with galloping folk rhythms and fast-paced drumming. The next few songs don't hold back or slow down much. I can best describe them as folk metal anthems. The arrangements feel classical, with the influence of a fantasy movie's original score. Track five, "Unsr'er Floten Klang" has almost an Irish folk feel to it, the kind of party music you would find in an old pub. The seventh track is "Heavy Chill" and it's a hard one to describe because it's got the folk vibe but it's mixed with some 80s dance-y sound from some one-hit wonder. The next track I could best describe as whimsical and a little circus-like, not words that usually get anywhere near metal. The last four songs go back to a more epic tone; they have a heroic and ranging feel like ancient battles. Of course, they could be songs about ice cream because I don't know any German. The last song, "The Unknown Episode", is in

**Total Isolation – Self-Titled**  
**Self-Released**

The members of Total Isolation have been in a lot of bands over the years, and you've probably heard of those bands, but that's not where they want the focus to be. This is a new project with all new tracks that speak for themselves - you don't need any background to know this shit fucking rips. Because they're going as a three-piece with the bassist and guitarist sharing vocals, there's not a lot of fluff or extras here. This is straight-forward music with pure intensity and anger. What I do like about the band in general is that although they are all drug-free and vegans, they don't feel the need to make their band all about the ideals. The first thing you know about the band doesn't have to be that the members make certain choices in life.

English, though, and feels a bit like a love song... but it's still pretty epic. If you are a fan of folk metal, then I would have to say this is an album you need. The first half of the album is an epic pile of folk metal anthems that are exactly what I think the genre needs to be. Good pace, chanting lyrics and a good mix of traditional instrumental sound mixed in with metal guitars and fast drumming. There are those two tracks in the middle that I just find kind of odd, before it heads back into the epic realm. All in all, I find this to be a pretty good album; the first half puts you in a great mood with visions of your favourite fantasy movies dancing in your head. If you're already a fan of this band, then get at it.

-Michael F. Carnage

**Trap Them– Blissfucker**  
**Prosthetic Records**

One of the world's most sonically visceral bands has returned with yet another howling masterpiece. To say I was eagerly awaiting this new release negates the fact that their previous effort is still going strong in my playlist. Who could forget the blood-curdling screams that relentlessly adorn each track?

"Salted Crypts" starts off with a thoroughly evil-sounding riff that only the most hardcore of blood drinkers could sink their teeth into. Aside from all the increased blackness, it's early in the first couple of tracks that it becomes clear they have chosen speed as the primary answer in trying to out-do any previous work. These hyper-kinetic thrash riffs are so ferocious and dense that it feels like a sabre-toothed cat is going to thrash out of the speakers and chomp your head off at any given moment.

Trap Them has definitely upped the doom level with coffins full of dour funeral marches for all you vamps to sharpen your fangs upon. Yes, this album is leaner and meaner than their other releases. It also sounds like this band drinks a far more lethal amount of cruelty than the rest. Consequently, these monochrome black-and-white image-inducing songs are purer and filled with way more pissed off anger than 90% of the hardcore genre alive and kicking right now. Sheer musical force is one impressive feat to have as your bread and butter.

-Dan Potter

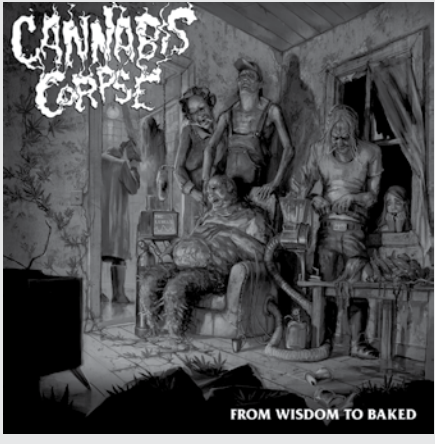
**Destiny Potato– Lun**  
**Self-Released**

Crikey, this album starts off like a Paramore record with an intro full of sad, girlish vocals. It really goes to show that djent styles of metal are still hellbent on evolving by including much greater contrasts and more unexpected elements then a David Lynch movie. Unfortunately, I feel it is a requisite to mention that, like any good idea, djent has become a form of musical cancer strangling out a lot of the potential commercial appeal of other just-as-worthy heavy genres. But this release quickly made me put the hate aside. The atmosphere of cold dark space that occupies the spaces between face-melting low-tuned death funk and Otep-style emotional purges are done to perfection. All the glitches and twitches found on "Machine" sound like an intergalactic oasis of percolating extra-terrestrials. When they bleed into "Love Song", which is full of complex grooves and really cool cyber-girl vocal effects, I realized

that this is djent at its mercurial best. The genre-blending really takes a pleasingly bizarre turn with "Lunatic", where the severe stomp of unison prog riffs takes some gypsy polka for a ride with our old pal Krampus. Meshuggah meets accordion? Well I don't know, seems like something Devin Townsend would do... whilst wearing a tunic! For me, the sheer volume of tones and ideas in that aforementioned tune, along with the fully orchestrated "House of Lies" or the Middle Eastern-inged "Addict", makes this debut a winner from start to finish. Pushing serious boundaries without making it feel confrontational is what a lot of these

This year at the San Diego Comic Convention, we hooked up our bro's with Municipal Waste with a few passes so they could get their nerd on before their show at the San Diego Comicon after party! Tony Foresta (Municipal Waste, Iron Reagan) and Phil Hall (Municipal Waste, Iron Reagan and Cannabis Corpse) are always busy, touring, recording, and when they get home they go back out on the road and do it again.

With a bunch of fly in shows with the Waste in San Diego, Denver, Montreal, New York City, the guys are touring with Iron Reagan, and playing their hometown Gwar-B-Q in Richmond, Virginia. If you can't check them out on the road, make sure you take a look at their new material from Iron Reagan (US releaswe Sept 16) and Cannabis Corpse.



**Iron Reagan – The Tyranny of Will**  
**Relapse Records**

This is the fourth release from IR since the band's inception in 2012 (including a digital only release of 13 songs, Spoiled Identity, each song is barely a half minute of brutality) and truth be told this album is actually the first full length with the current lineup. Tony and Phil from Municipal Waste are joined by Ryan Parish (Darkest Hour), Mark Bronzino and Rob Skotis. While I was a huge fan of their original full length release "Worse than Dead", this latest effort blows it out of the water. Spending the last year on the road together has really shown on this release with fine tuned ferocity. Recorded at Phil's own home studio, these guys are DIY live in the flesh. Check out their video "Eyeball gore" online, or check em out on the road, you won't be disappointed!

number. The lead vocals are a little deeper and more guttural than the usual screechy vocals that Charlie is known for. It's easily one of the standouts. Also, the blisteringly fast "Paradise Entrails" rocks pretty hard. I would have thought that the whole Goler schtick would have gotten tired by now, but here are another fourteen songs that follow, and no sign of slowing down. The drumming (Cranswick) is super tasteful and not totally-triggered sounding. I also like the fact that Henry and Charlie both play leads on the album. So pick this up, and definitely go see these guys live.

- Willy Jak

**The Golars – In & Outlaws**  
**Unrest Records**

In & Outlaws is the fourth album by Vancouver metal veterans The Golars. First off, I think this is their best production to date; it was recorded, produced and mixed by Rob "Chicken" Shallcross. The opening song and title track, "In and Outlaws", is a crushing thrashy



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*Sleez In The City*

**Observations and Advice**  
 By CJ Sleez

This August I celebrate a birthday and another year passing. It's a time of year that I pause to appreciate life, asses my daily experiences, reflect on the past and look toward the future. This has inspired me to share with you some thoughts on life...

We live in a world where joy and suffering are dealt out in equal yet varying measures. Each new day brings with it a fresh opportunity for a blessing, a curse, or neither. Such is the case for so many who tread through their lives without passion or purpose; people who seem to exist solely on subconscious habits, routines, and predictability, rarely being wholly present in the

moment and seldom rising to their full potential. To avoid settling into such a slump, I offer these five points of advice:  
 -Try to learn from every interaction, no matter how small and insignificant it may seem  
 -Decide what is most important to you and dedicate your time to pursuing it with enthusiasm  
 -Be cautious, however, do not focus so hard that you lose perspective. Pause to reflect and avoid seeing in tunnel vision  
 -Forgive as quickly as you can. Resentment and hate hurt most the person who harbours them. After all, it's possible the other person neither knows nor cares about your pain. Holding onto it only allows them to continue to hurt you  
 -Be grateful for all things that cross your path, for as dark and cruel as this world may sometimes be, it also holds many wonders and curiosities. Learn to balance the good with the bad

Have a question for CJ Sleez concerning Sex, Drugs or Rock n' Roll? Email them to [CJSleez@hotmail.com](mailto:CJSleez@hotmail.com). If your question is used or printed, she'll send you a free copy of her latest CD, *Valley Of The Shadow*. For more info on CJ, check out her site @ [www.CJSLEEZ.com](http://www.CJSLEEZ.com)



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-DEK KAVE '14

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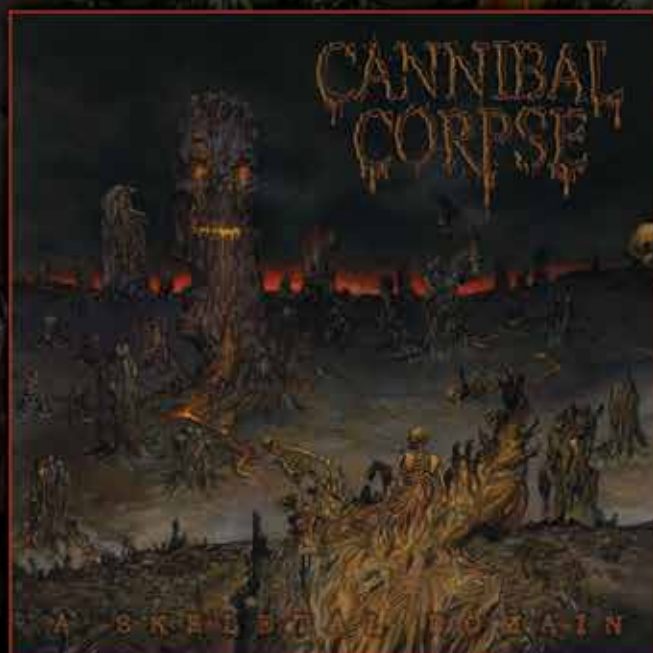
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